



# **2006 South Louisiana Recovery Survey: Citizen and Civic Leader Research Summary of Findings**

**Project funded by:  
Louisiana Recovery Authority Support Foundation**

# Part I: Citizen Summary of Findings

## Background and Objectives

The Louisiana Speaks Long Range Planning team requires citizen input in order to make sure that citizen values and priorities form the basis for the recovery plan and the investment decisions that will ultimately flow from it.

In order to obtain the most extensive amount of feedback in the most accurate and comprehensive way, a research project was initiated and designed to meet the following objectives:

- Provide in-depth citizen input for both short and long term planning teams
- Provide detailed citizen input for messaging and communication management
- Benchmark awareness and attitudes towards the LRA “Louisiana Speaks” planning process
- Enable citizens to feel heard and plans to be framed by community values
- Create an ongoing citizen panel for further feedback as the plan evolves over time.

## Project Funding

Funding for the research was provided by the LRA Support Foundation and the contract was managed by executives at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Center for Planning Excellence.

## Research Team

The research was conducted by the following organizations:

Collective Strength provided overall project management, design, analytics and presentation of deliverables.

Dr. Kirby Goidel and Steve Procopio at The LSU Manship School of Mass Communication performed the data collection via phone and web and provided analytic support.

Dr. Silas Lee of Silas Lee and Associates provided New Orleans-based design and analytic support.

Edward Melendez, public heath consultant and co-founder of the Urban Conservancy (also a New Orleans evacuee to Texas) provided web strategy, outreach support and analytic perspective.

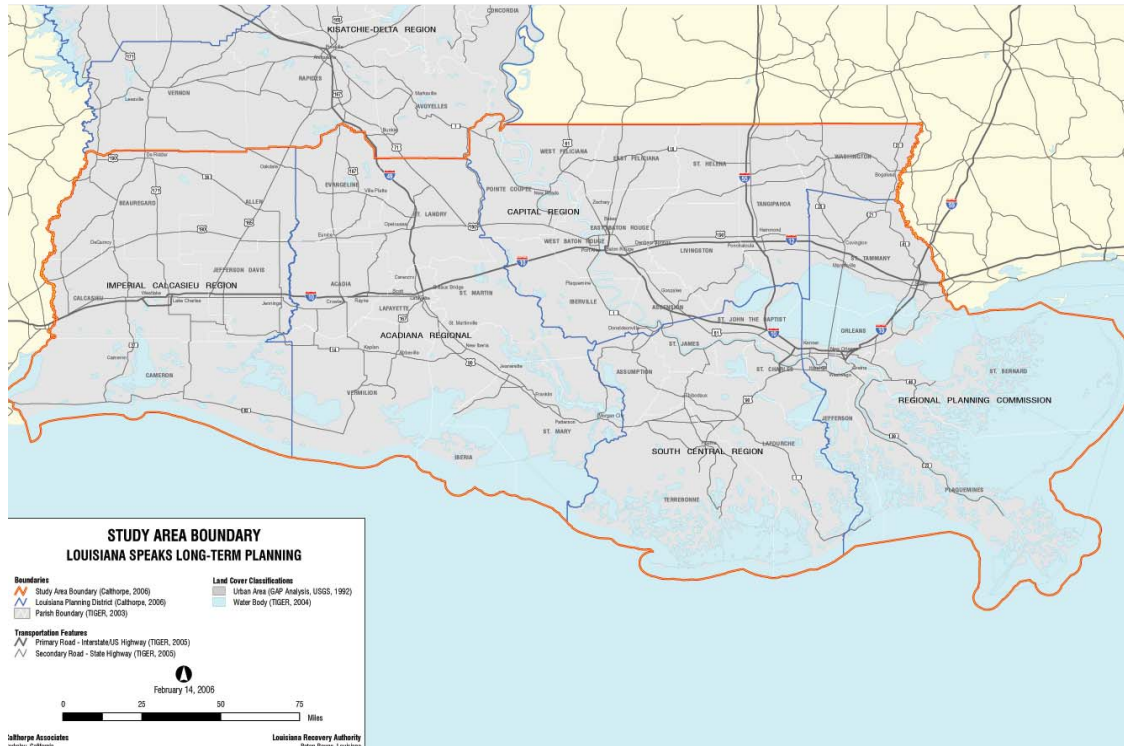
Anthony Patton, CEO of EboNetworks provided diversity outreach for the web survey.

The research team would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their expertise and encouragement during this project: Kathy Ashworth, Peter Calthorpe, Steve Castaner, Ashli Collins, Jessica Dardenne, Scott Davis, Joe DiStefano, Tom Farley, Joan Freitag, John Fregonese, Ray Gindroz, Lauren Greenburg, Robert Grow, Ann Guissinger, Joselin Landry, Josh Abrams, Celu Bering, Jane Kendall, Diana Nguyen, Chante Vaughn, Casey Roberts, Alyssa Lee, Christopher Leinberger, Heidi Rechtsiek, Mark, Romig, Timothy Rood, Andrew Sachs, Sheldon Thompson Schmidt, Larry Sides, Kevin Snyder, Kristian Sonnier, Boo Thomas, Jody Towers, Dwight Townes, and Rickie Windle.

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## Research Methodology

### Louisiana Speaks – study area boundary



This study represents the most comprehensive survey of regional issues and perceptions since the hurricanes arrived. It is not a statewide poll – instead it corresponds to the long range planning region as defined by the LRA, and shown in the map above.

The study includes 2,500 total interviews completed between February 15 and April 30 2006.

1,000 interviews were conducted using random digit dialing phone calls across the study region pictured above. The sample design for these phone interviews was stratified to pre-hurricane US Census population estimates for race and ethnicity and gave priority emphasis to the parishes most heavily affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as defined by the LRA.

The sample design means that there is no ‘bias’ in terms of who responded to the survey. The survey team pro-actively ensured that enough responses were received from all five of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the region to be statistically reliable.

2006 Recovery Survey: Citizen and Civic Leader Research Summary of Findings

The confidence interval for this in state telephone survey segment of the research is plus or minus 3 percent.

In order to include out of state members of the diaspora and to increase data stability, 1,500 additional interviews were conducted using non traditional, non randomly selected techniques. 1,300 interviews were conducted via web hosted on the [www.Louisianarebuilds.info](http://www.Louisianarebuilds.info) site.

Another 200 telephone interviews were conducted via phone with evacuees in Texas and Georgia using evacuee lists provided by public sources in those states.

500 interviews were completed with out of state displaced Louisiana citizens currently living in 27 different states.

1,257 interviews are with displaced citizens. 864 of the total interviews are with African American citizens.

## Research Findings

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key findings from the citizen survey. Additional data from the survey or questions about the research are available upon request. Some of the findings in this research will seem obvious, but it is nevertheless important to quantify and measure the specific extent of certain conditions and requirements after the hurricanes. The data in this report will primarily be used to measure progress as the recovery planning continues.

### Highest Hopes, Key Themes and Values

The highest hopes that citizens hold for the recovery process is that it will go beyond just rebuilding what existed on the ground before the hurricanes and will produce a “next generation” society and a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Citizens have a strong sense that out of the tragic pain and destruction of the hurricanes there also exists an extraordinary once in a “many generations” opportunity to transcend and try to resolve longstanding race and social equity problems.

The major values and themes that emerged from the research are:

2006 Recovery Survey: Citizen and Civic Leader Research Summary of Findings

*Safety.* This category includes flood protection such as coastal restoration and levees as well as clean air and water and a strong emphasis on public safety. It also extends to financial safety in terms of insurance availability and clear direction about risks involved in rebuilding in certain areas.

*Prosperity.* Defined primarily by affordable housing, jobs and schools, this category is essential to transforming South Louisiana to a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and to nurturing the dreams of citizens from all walks of life.

*Cultural Integrity.* Perhaps nowhere in America is the longing for cultural continuity stronger than in South Louisiana. And citizens are not just talking about culture as it is known in New Orleans but Cajun culture and all the other micro cultures that exist throughout the region. Art, music and food play a central role but culture here also refers to shared history and a deep connection to family roots.

*Inclusion and Fairness.* Citizens have little faith in major political institutions and want to ensure that a high degree of citizen participation is achieved so that the recovery process is fair. These are bedrock values in the context of long range planning and will form the basis for citizen's views about whether or not the plan is credible. 60 percent of those surveyed want to personally participate in planning efforts.

### Extensive Degree of Regional Consensus

For an area that has often been seen as politically fragmented and somewhat parochial, the research suggests a potentially surprising and substantial degree of consensus.

Two major infrastructure issues dominate the consensus: coastal restoration and levee repair.

More than 90 percent of all those surveyed support coastal and wetlands protection as a means of flood control. Citizens from all walks of life, from all demographics and parishes want to see the coast restored and protected.

Levees of “authorized design height prior to the hurricane” as proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, are not considered adequate by more than 81 percent of citizens. More than 78 percent believe that Category 5 protection is what is needed to make the area “safe enough.” While the financial and technical realities may be very different, these perceptions and opinions about levees are widely held. Almost 15 percent of respondents believe there is no way to make the levees safe enough.

Citizens from across the region show a tremendous degree of agreement about their top recovery priorities and what the LRA should spend its time and money on. These include:

- Coastal and Wetlands Restoration
- Category 5 Levee Protection
- Schools and Education
- Public Safety
- Drainage
- Jobs
- Housing
- Healthcare

The following chart summarizes the top priorities selected from a list of more than thirty choices.

Chart 1:

## **Importance of what the LRA should spend it's time and money on:**

• Providing adequate levee protection against future hurricanes	94.2%
• Building or improving public schools	91.9%
• Protecting against wetlands loss/coastal erosion	90.3%
• Providing for crime prevention/public safety	90.0%
• Providing fire prevention and protection, and other emergency services	89.6%
• Addressing drainage problems and concerns	86.0%
• Providing jobs and job training	85.8%
• Providing access to health care services	85.7%

Additionally, two areas of services provision also stand out across the region as major priorities:

- An acute need for mental health services exists following the hurricanes. The degree of depression and despair among many displaced residents is painfully obvious.
- Elder care services are urgently needed. The need for care is compounded by the fact that 15 percent of respondents in state report having elderly relatives living with them.

A majority of South Louisiana citizens understand that not all parts of the region that were heavily damaged by the hurricanes should be rebuilt to levels that do not make them safe. Nevertheless, most citizens believe that it is important to live in Louisiana even if their community is not rebuilt. Since 67 percent of in-state respondents have parents or



grandparents who lived in Louisiana, the strong ties to place are an integral element to understanding citizen priorities.

When asked what is the most important thing for planners to understand about their area, the top answer was “we were a community -- not just buildings.”

### Recovery Needs

When asked what they need most for their own recovery, citizens replied with the following needs:

- Money
- Jobs
- Answers and faster decision making by government officials
- Healthcare

Peace of mind, prayers and God were also frequently mentioned replies.

### Most Displaced Citizens Likely to Move Back

Overall, 57 percent of all displaced residents say they are somewhat or very likely to return to permanently return home. Those displaced but still within the state of Louisiana are much more certain about their plans, with 63 percent of them saying they are very likely to return.

However, fewer – 39 percent -- of out of state displaced residents say they are very likely to return.

Of course, wanting to move back and hoping to move back are not definitive plans. There are multiple factors influencing decisions to move back. At the top of the list of key factors are levees and coastal flood protection, jobs, money, whether family and friends have also moved back, affordable housing and availability of services.

57 percent of those displaced that are planning to come back indicate that they will come home within the next six months. About one-third just do not know when they will be able to return even if they say it is likely that they will do so.

Displaced residents say that they miss their family, friends, home and neighborhood most. Many mentioned that they miss their food and other aspects of the South Louisiana culture. Many respondents say they miss “everything.”

When asked what they like most about their new locations, displaced citizens most frequently mention that it is clean, safe, quiet, and peaceful, that the government seems more competent and there are better job opportunities. What effect these experiences have on future expectations among those who do move back remains to be seen. Perhaps they will have a more positive vision of what is possible in South Louisiana or perhaps will hold leaders to a higher standard than before the storms. There also may be more disillusionment and bitterness. Outreach and communication about “lessons learned” and new ideas may be important to discuss among those citizens who do return.

### Investment in Transportation Infrastructure

The South Louisiana region has a strong leaning towards investment in a mix of roads and transit choices. African American respondents are far more interested in transit than other groups. Residents of the western part of the region are far more interested in roads, but people throughout the region generally want transportation dollars to flow to a balance between roads and transit.

### Negative Hurricane Effects

The research survey asked citizens if they have experienced any of eight different effects from the hurricanes. Chart 2 shows these effects among all citizens who were surveyed. Chart 3 shows clearly that more African American citizens experienced negative hurricane consequences than those of other racial groups. This is especially true for those consequences that have direct economic implications.

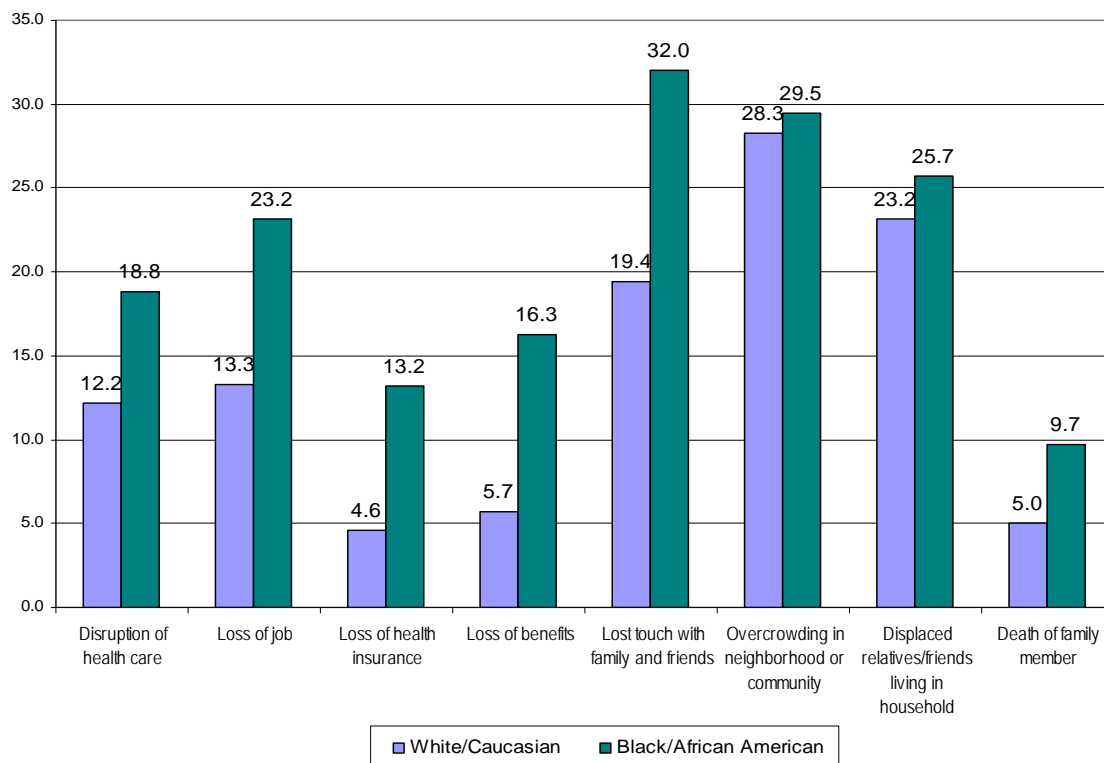
Chart 2:

## Hurricane Effects: Total

Lost Touch with Family or Friends	65%
Displaced Family or Friends Living With	46%
Overcrowding in Your Neighborhood	29%
Loss of Job	29%
Disruption of Health Care	28%
Loss of Other Benefits	19%
Loss of Health Insurance	18%
Death of a Family Member	11%

Chart 3:

## Hurricane Effects: By Race

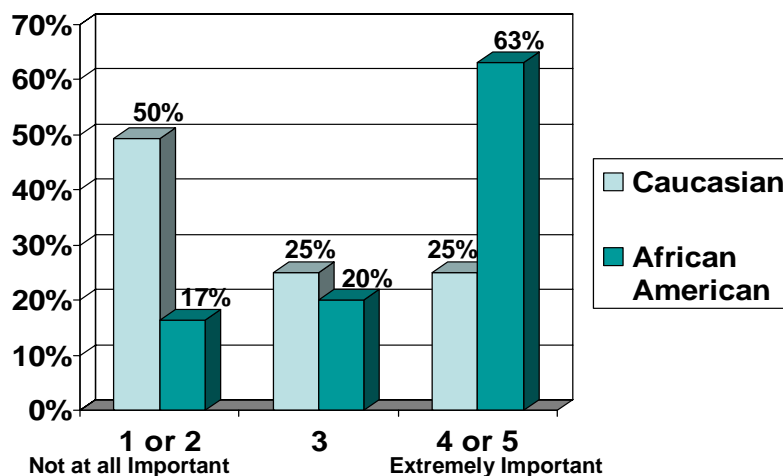


Perhaps in part because of the disproportionate hurricane impacts, African American citizens feel strongly about New Orleans returning to

its pre-hurricane racial composition. Citizens of other racial groups do not feel this is as important. This issue is one of the few in the survey where opinions are quite polarized. Note that African Americans in other parts of the region tend to feel strongly about the racial composition of New Orleans just as those who live in the city now do.

Chart 4:

## Racial mix in New Orleans



Question: Some people are concerned that the New Orleans area racial mix has changed and that there are fewer African Americans residing there now. On a scale of one to five where one is not at all important and five is very important, how important is it to you that New Orleans return to its pre-hurricane racial mix?

## Political Institutions: Performance and Expectations

When asked which organizations will be most effective in helping the rebuilding process, no level of government – neighborhood, city, state or federal, received more than 30 percent.

When asked who else might be effective, respondents overwhelmingly answered “citizens” as well as churches, non-profits and other community groups. The US Congress also was mentioned as possibly effective, probably due to its role in approving federal funding.

The impact of the recently approved Road Home program, various planning charrettes around the region and the decision regarding \$4.2

billion in federal funding requests have no doubt played a role in recent weeks to further shape opinions.

Because the timing of this research coincided with many of these important recovery milestones, the numbers and conclusions herein are a benchmark from which further survey work can measure progress.

### Unmistakable Optimism and Faith in Recovery (With Caveats)

Despite the devastating misery caused to many across the region and despite the traditional skepticism about in political institutions, beyond the widespread depression and despair, there is a tremendous degree of optimism and faith that the recovery could work. Clearly, the people of South Louisiana want to believe, and do believe that good can come from this tragedy.

Almost 70 percent of the respondents say they believe the qualities that made their community special can be re-established during the recovery.

Almost a full 80 percent believe that if people participate in the planning process and if the plan is carried out well, South Louisiana will be a good place to live again. These two caveats – that regular people are included and that the plan, once created, is executed well – are two of critical factors for success of the LRA's efforts.

## Perceptions about Long Range Recovery and Planning

At this early stage, perceptions about the LRA and the planning process are not fully formed. While the LRA has had a number of specific, isolated outreach “events” – it has not yet executed a comprehensive public information and outreach campaign.

Awareness of planning specifics is low. Only about one quarter of all the respondents say they have heard anything specific about any planning process, including the LRA’s.

Further, there is a large amount of uncertainty about whether or not any of rebuilding and planning processes will be fair.

Overall, just under one half the citizens in the region believe the plan will be fair, with about 22 percent saying it will be mostly or totally fair and 25 percent somewhat fair. Just over 30 percent say it will be unfair. 13 percent don’t know and 6 percent neither fair nor unfair.

African Americans and those citizens displaced out of state are the least certain about the fairness of the plan.

When asked what the LRA can do to make its planning process fair as the regional planning process gets underway, respondents want the agency to “be honest,” to distribute the money fairly and/or equally, to include citizen feedback and to “monitor progress and report back to citizens.”

Confidence in the plan being “carried out in a way that works for most citizens” at this early stage is shaky at best. Overall, under half the respondents think it will work for most and under half don’t. But almost 70 percent of displaced citizens think it won’t and over 60 percent of those in the eastern half of the region – displaced or not – think it won’t.

When asked what the LRA can do to help them feel more confident, answers included:

- Action
- A plan, more information, more answers
- Someone to talk to and reassure me, someone who understands

- Dynamic leadership
- Honesty
- Cooperation
- Representation and citizen involvement
- Accountability
- Take the politics out of it
- Show me it will be different this time.

The research shows that great deal of work needs to be done to improve awareness of the plan and perceptions about its fairness and confidence in its eventual implementation.

Clearly, the lack of faith in major institutions poses special challenges for the LRA and underscores the need for the LRA to step up the pace in proving its integrity, credibility and non-political nature.

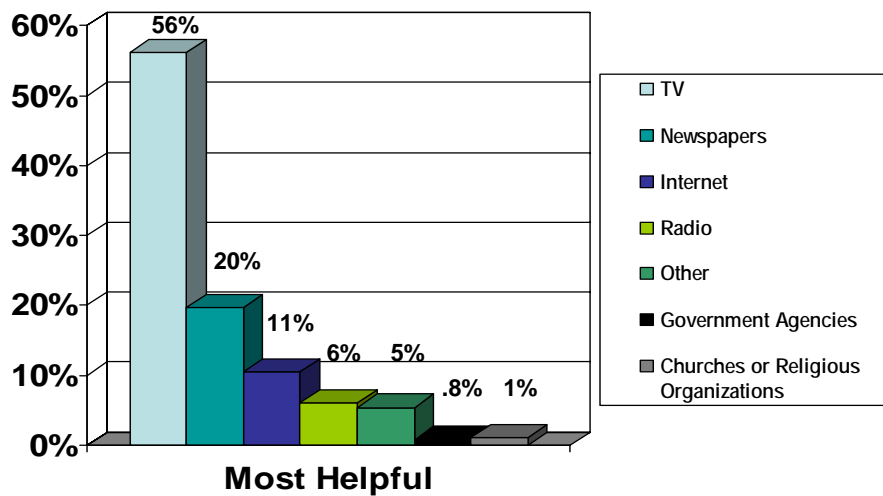
The LRA and related projects - Louisiana Speaks, The Road Home, Louisianarebuilds.info - do not currently form a coherent framework for messaging and outreach. These may in fact be confusing to the public. The LRA needs to recognize that the victims of this catastrophe need more clarity and more effective decision support in order to move forward, and therefore must simplify its project names and messages.

Streamlining and strengthening its communication and outreach will go a long way towards helping citizens feel more confident. In the next few months, this may be one of the most important factors for the long-term recovery. Generally, the findings from this research should be cause for immediate concern and action if the public's inherent faith and optimism in the potential for the recovery to work is to be upheld.

### Communications

For those remaining in Louisiana, television is the most helpful communications vehicle, followed at a distance by newspapers, the internet and radio.

## For in-state citizens - TV and Newspapers are Most Helpful



- For out-of-state citizens, the internet is most helpful (47%) followed by TV at 24% and newspapers at 9%.

For out-of-state Louisianans, the internet is most useful. However, for those out of state who are not internet-enabled, information is very hard to come by since local television, newspaper and radio coverage is very limited. For out of state displaced citizens, efforts at communication thus far have been inadequate.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### The Climate for Regional Planning is Very Favorable

Given the tremendous consensus about recovery priorities and the optimism about the potential for recovery, the research team concludes that the current climate is quite conducive for regional planning. Despite the traditionally fragmented nature of Louisiana politics, citizens across the region – in New Orleans, in Baton Rouge, in Lake Charles, in Acadiana and many places in between - share a common set of values, hopes and concerns, whether they realize it or not.

The issue of coastal and wetlands restoration is perhaps the most unifying long term planning issue of all, as it enjoys near universal support across the region.



The extent of agreement about what should be the LRA's very top priorities can be leveraged into a broad regional consensus.

Still, a number of significant challenges exist that will inhibit the effectiveness of the LRA's regional planning effort. These include:

#### Long Range Planning Needs to Have a Greater Sense of Urgency

While by definition, "long range" planning has a 25-year time horizon, citizen's needs to see, hear and most importantly *feel* a sense of urgency from the LRA. With so much despair and depression, so much uncertainty about the plan and so much confusion about leadership, the LRA needs to step up its communication and solidify its role. It needs to allow citizens to more fully understand its action plan, associated milestones and method of providing accountability and measurable results. Communication regarding the LRA's strategy and action steps – short term and long term – needs to be much more effective both for in state and out of state citizens.

#### Recovery Needs to Address Longstanding Race and Social Equity Problems

Citizens see the recovery chance as a once in a many generations chance to dramatically improve longstanding systemic problems such as education, health care, poverty and other racial and social equity issues. But the question is how to best accomplish that?

#### Out of State Communication System is Not Viable and Needs Immediate Attention

The research team is compelled to point out that during this research, it became clear that communications with out of state displaced citizens – especially those who do not have internet access or skills - are not adequate. These Louisiana citizens need more frequent and effective communication. We propose two solutions: first, an integrated contact database of all known evacuees and second, an "off-line" marketing strategy utilizing case worker networks and faith based organizations in population centers as one possible approach. These are both practical and low cost means of making sure that evacuees are included and their voices heard as the planning process evolves.

### Key Factors for LRA Credibility

Perhaps the most important calculus for regional planning in South Louisiana is the following equation:

Inclusion + Fairness + Leadership + Action on Priorities = Credibility.

Citizens want to see participation from ordinary people, churches and other non-profits. They do not have confidence in the major political institutions and thus demonstrable inclusion is critically important.

Fairness needs to be more than lip service. The LRA needs to work hard to counter the widespread fear that less affluent and less educated citizens are going to be left out of the recovery. For many citizens, fairness means distributing recovery funds equally.

The role of civic leadership cannot be underestimated for the potential success of the LRA's planning efforts. From a related study (see the 2006 Recovery Survey: Civic Leader Research Summary of Findings in part 2 of this report), it is clear that leaders from across the region hold the same concerns that most citizens in the region expressed in this survey. The survey results suggest trusted civic leaders may be best positioned to galvanize and inspire public confidence due to their perceived independence and credibility.

The Long Range Planning team needs to maintain and project a relentless focus on answers and action. Citizens need an honest discussion of the tough issues. The tone and pace of LRA communication needs to mirror citizens' own intense need for pragmatic information and solutions.

Creating viable partnerships that unify citizens across the region that emphasize inclusion and participation will go a long way towards a more sustainable and credible recovery process.

For more information about this survey, or to request additional data, please send email to [info@collectivestrength.com](mailto:info@collectivestrength.com) or call 1-800-216-1044 or 512-445-2200.

## Part 2: Civic Leader Summary of Findings

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of research interviews conducted as part of the Louisiana Speaks Long Range Planning efforts.

### Background and Purpose

In February 2006, Collective Strength was asked to design, conduct and analyze a series of interviews with civic leaders from across South Louisiana.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Provide strategic input from civic leaders to the Long Range planning team at the front end of the planning process.
- Define hopes and concerns about the plan from a variety of perspectives.
- Understand key priorities for making Louisiana better.
- Create a framework for engaging civic leaders with the planning team and with each other in order to facilitate planning and rebuilding efforts

### Methodology

More than 100 one-on-one interviews were conducted via phone or email during March and April 2006. The civic leaders included CEOs, elected officials, non profit advocates from neighborhood, religious, arts and environmental groups as well as members of the LRA board and the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (BNOB).

Approximately one-third of the interviews were with business leaders, one-third with non-profit, academic and religious leaders and one-third with elected officials or members of the LRA or BNOB boards.

The list of participants to interview was provided by the Center for Planning Excellence staff. A complete list of all civic leaders who were interviewed appears in Appendix 2. Participants agreed to have their names used in this report but to have their answers to all questions reported only in the aggregate, not on an individual basis, in order to maximize candor. A copy of the interview questions appears in Appendix 3. Note: additional interviews will be done with civic leaders who were not included as of the deadline for this report upon request.

Special thanks go to Ann Guissinger, strategic advisor to the LRA. Elizabeth “Boo” Thomas, Hal Cohen, John Spain, John Davies, Ty McMaines, Rachel DiResto and Mary Talbot at Center for Planning Excellence and to Victor Rubin and Ashley Shelton of PolicyLink, for their expertise and encouragement during this project.

Collective Strength would like to express its deepest appreciation to the civic leaders who shared their ideas and their fierce passion for Louisiana with us.

## Key Findings

### Section One: Awareness, Hopes and Concerns about the Louisiana Speaks Long Range Plan

Civic leaders interviewed had a generally low level of awareness about the Louisiana Speaks plan. Most respondents reported having little to no specific information, with the exception of those who serve on the LRA Board itself.

Perhaps due to this low level of awareness, the civic leaders were evenly split between optimism and pessimism about the eventual success of planning efforts, with many feeling a mix of both ends of the spectrum.

When asked what they hoped for and expected from the plan, there was a great diversity of opinion and answers were literally “all over the map.” Three strategic themes emerged:

- Fixing systemic problems that existed before the hurricanes.
- Building a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

- Becoming more regional and “speaking with one voice”.

For many respondents, especially those from the New Orleans area, there is an uncertainty about whether – or how – the plan will acknowledge the disproportionate effects of the hurricanes on African Americans. Further, there are hopes that the plan will provide for broad inclusion from all parts of the African American community and that by doing so, that the plan will offer new and more effective ways to resolve deep, longstanding economic and social equity problems.

Civic leaders in the Western part of the region are concerned that the effects of Hurricane Rita are trivialized or overlooked by regional planners compared to those of Katrina and that the rebuilding of the Cajun culture is not as valued – economically or emotionally - as is New Orleans based culture.

Dozens of other kinds of answers were given to the question of hopes for the plan, but few other major themes exist. We conclude from this lack of consensus that more work needs to be done to help civic leaders share a “common vision” for the plan so that expectations can be met and ultimately so that momentum needed for implementation of the plan can be achieved.

While hopes for the plan were very diffused, the following factors for success were shared by nearly all the civic leaders:

- Communication, community engagement, inclusiveness and achieving buy-in was far and away the top factor mentioned.
- Acquiring the necessary funding was the next most frequently given answer.
- Leadership was also often discussed in the context of this question.

Tremendous support was expressed by civic leaders for making coastal and wetlands restoration as a major planning priority.

Further, when specifically asked about the required investment, for coastal restoration being as much as \$16 Billion, nearly all were in favor. “Whatever it takes” was a frequent answer to the question

about support for investment. Some leaders want the investment to be “chunked down” over a period of years and many suggested the potential funding strategy come from oil and gas revenue.

Of all the questions asked of this group of civic leaders, coastal and wetlands restoration produced by far the most unified consensus. Education improvement was also a nearly universal priority.

At least four other key issues were also deemed critical for the plan to address– housing, jobs, levees and transportation infrastructure.

Easily the top answer to a question about obstacles to the planning process was “politics.” Civic leaders believe the “business as usual” mentality and a perceived inability of politicians to put the common good ahead of personal ambitions pose significant challenges to making progress towards key planning goals.

Other obstacles mentioned include lack of funding, lack of leadership and a lack of communication. Many civic leaders also cited an inability to learn to think regionally as a serious potential problem for the plan. A need to “speak with one voice” was often mentioned as a prerequisite to securing federal funding.

Civic leaders were uncomfortable with the image of Louisiana projected to the rest of the nation and the world. They want the plan to re-establish Louisiana as a competent, well run place with abundant natural resources and the human talent necessary to excel.

Generally, civic leaders believe that implementation of the plan will require:

- Leadership and private sector champions
- Inclusion, communication and buy-in at all levels
- Funding
- Accountability and metrics

Many also suggested that the planning team take small steps and focus on “early wins” in order to gain confidence from the public.

## Section Two: Systemic Changes

Changes in the way politics are conducted and substantial improvement in education were the two main themes in answering a question about what systemic changes are required to make the region truly thrive and prosper.

Civic leaders cite a need for extensive political reform. Many of those interviewed specifically mentioned the need for an end to perceived corruption and graft. Better cooperation between different levels of government and an end to the fragmented nature of governance near New Orleans were also discussed by many of the civic leaders.

Education – most frequently defined encompassing k-12, college level as well as workforce training – was nearly universally seen as a kind of “holy grail” for systemic change that would make the region truly thrive and prosper in a way it never has before.

Less than one quarter of the civic leaders feel that the political courage exists to make systemic change happen in South Louisiana. Nearly all of those who believe it exists are themselves elected officials. Lack of confidence in all levels of the political system poses significant challenges for the planning and recovery efforts. The lack of confidence is especially severe among business leaders, but also permeates among other types of stakeholders.

### Section Three: Economic Development

The civic leaders interviewed feel that tremendous improvement is needed in education and training for the region's economy to work. Leadership in the area of economic development is seen as questionable and the political culture viewed as a liability.

Not surprisingly, key economic assets to build on for the future include the port, the river, tourism and the oil and gas industries.

Few consistent themes exist regarding economic strategy and there is little consensus around new directions. There is a widespread desire for new ways of thinking and innovation, but not much of a center of gravity around the specifics. Many respondents called for more cooperation from government, less regulation and less "interference." Many leaders feel the business tax structure is counter-productive.

Two concepts were popular among the leaders when asked about economic development:

- Focus on taking care of existing businesses rather than spending a lot on recruiting out of state major employers
- Creating a vibrant economic climate for diverse kinds of entrepreneurs.

Three areas were seen as providing the best return on investment for the economy:

- Education and workforce training
- Better flood protection and levees
- Improvements in transportation infrastructure

About half of the civic leaders were aware of the Gulf Opportunity Zone incentives, although few of these had a detailed grasp. Most were supportive of the concept.



## Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from the research:

- Communication about the long range planning efforts is paramount. Outreach efforts aimed at increasing the level of planning awareness among civic leaders is needed. Concepts about the plan are very sketchy at this stage. Even the phrase “Louisiana Speaks” is not yet understood.
- Special care must be taken to explain the planning process to civic leaders, but more importantly, needs to focus on implementation. The key milestones, initial goals and funding strategy are crucial areas to discuss with key stakeholders.
- Cohesion across stakeholder groups is essential as the civic leaders see overcoming parochial concerns and “speaking with one voice” as vitally important.
- Wetlands and coastal restoration is an almost universally supported priority. The already existing consensus around this issue could be leveraged as an initial “unifying theme.”
- Economic development strategy for the recovery needs greater cohesion. Taking care of existing businesses and creating a climate that empowers entrepreneurs are two elements that resonate well with civic leaders.
- Improvement in education represents the pinnacle of systemic change and may be key to achieving other long range planning goals.
- Lack of faith in the political system indicates a greater need for private and non profit sector leadership for the plan.
- Clearly, there is more than enough brainpower, passion and pre- existing consensus to start driving toward a new and innovative regional strategy.

The research team suggests the following initial recommendations:

- Accelerate basic communication and outreach to civic leaders and other key stakeholder groups. Private and public sector leaders should “champion” the plan.
- Do whatever it takes to achieve and demonstrate a high degree of inclusion on the front end of the process.
- Evaluate the best ways to bring best practices and bold thinking about longstanding race and social equity problems.
- Leverage the extensive cohesion around coastal restoration as an example of regional and speaking in a “unified voice.”
- Inspire civic leaders’ sense of destiny about achieving a new education paradigm.
- Fire up the sense of can-do, local self reliance and provide a “distributed intelligence” model of planning that fully engages the talent around the region.
- Unify the business and non profit communities around economic development efforts aimed at taking care of existing businesses and embracing diverse kinds of entrepreneurs.
- Develop a job training program that is tied directly to job creation efforts and one that rewards results.
- Build confidence by emphasizing the implementation phase of the plan early and often: focus on timelines, goals, funding strategies, short term wins, measurable results and real accountability.

## Appendix 1: Sampler of Civic Leader Responses

### Comments on the Long Range Planning Process:

*"Stakeholders and the leadership have to be of one accord. We have to stop being territorial and think about the region. That is critical. It has to be bottom up and not top down. It has not been very inclusive so far. Has everyone who should and want to had an opportunity - I don't know. I'm not sure everyone has the information they need to weigh in. The leadership of the area has to be able to convey the plan and to carry the plan."*

*"The process, I understand. But I don't think that those who are planning the process are living under the conditions that they are planning for. Someone told me the other day that the FEMA trailers would look a lot different if those who were designing the plan were living in a hotel or at their mother in laws. It would take a new sense of urgency. They would be working overtime to solve this problem."*

*"I really think that the plan should not be presented in such a way that it looks to the rest of the country that we are looking for everyone else to bail us out. We are committed to making the sacrifices, to working together in a new way to have an attractive development. Because this is a tragedy beyond us, but it was in part caused by failures of the federal government. But we are making our commitment."*

*"End poverty. Stop servicing and making money off of poverty. We have so much going for us. We are such a gorgeous state, so culturally rich - we are blessed as a state up the wazoo. We are poised in the hemisphere in a remarkable place. We've got to get rid of poverty. We have to get smart about this. We need to use entrepreneurial means and connecting, affordable capital. Eighty percent of the systemic poverty can be removed. Education is part of the answer."*

*"The state of Louisiana doesn't seem to be getting the respect that the rest of the country gets, and that Louisiana deserves because of its contributions to the economy and the cultural contributions. A good plan will easily communicate to the whole country so they know we are not whiners but really do need investment. That's not being communicated."*

*"(Louisiana) is a United States border. There is nothing between here and Costa Rica. This is IT. The US has a responsibility to protect its borders- the Louisiana coast. The US territory is being eaten up."*

*"(What we need is) the one voice. It killed us with Congress and the President. Everyone and their momma have gone to Congress to ask for something. We are not going on one bus. I would love if (that voice) incorporated all of what Louisiana needs."*

*"Money - absolutely. And time. You are dealing with a large geographic area that is geologically, emotionally and spiritually drained. Broken systems that need to inter-connect. People are also an obstacle. They are tired. They are moving through all the stages of grief - you see it in people and in organizations and institutions. They have to move on with their lives - whatever jobs they are attached to may not be there, schools may not be there. The reasons that people make decisions to change are just in constant motion."*

*"They need to get the locals, those who live here, to be part of it. Outsiders are not going to be able to tell us what to do."*

*"I'm not really sure about the strategy. There are so many different pieces to it. (There needs to be) more of a focus on economic justice - a recognition that many of the hurricane effects are race-based. There has to be some recognition that this is a problem."*

*"People need to understand exactly what is being recommended. The elected or appointed officials - they need to stick to them. Not that the plan can't change, people are looking for leaders who will make the hard calls. (But the plan needs) confirmation at the highest levels and don't change it unless absolutely necessary. Also, we have to get the feds in DC to buy into it. Get them off the dime and stop blaming New Orleans for not doing what it was supposed to do. We did what we were supposed to. Get them off the erroneous red herrings."*

*"No plan can capture the quirkiness of the state. To be dismissive of that would be a big mistake. Part of what makes New Orleans New Orleans is the hodgepodge of people who live here. They are black and white, predominantly poor. I don't think we need to build it back the way it was - it wasn't good. All the hurricane did was allow a public airing of these problems. The hurricane didn't create these problems. It did not create the poor people, the decline, it just exposed them."*

*"There is a big distrust between New Orleans and the rest of the state because some say that they don't want folks back. A couple of weeks ago there was an article about all these ruthless Hispanic gangs coming in from the West Coast. We have experienced this before. The hurricane dispersed the troublemakers, but they were OUR thugs. They were our kids. They did bad things but they were ours. To pretend that we are going to get rid of this element is absurd. This cannot be an Aspen, this cannot be a Seaside. Where do people think 'those people' are going to live? They need to live in the city. If these people can't live in the New New Orleans then we need to figure out how to get them jobs so they can. "*

*"I am mostly pessimistic. I am generally a very optimistic person but I just don't see the right things from Baton Rouge, I just don't see anything innovative and out of the box from them. After the Duany's go away, I just don't see them doing right. The process is probably very good. I went to one closing session at Live Oak Gardens and LOVED it all. But if it's put on the backs of the people of (this town) to get it done or the state to get it done, it won't happen. I just had a*

*meeting with our legislature guys - they need to focus on how to help communities help themselves. We need to rely on the local leadership to get it done, with state-level leadership showing the way. The symbolic leadership needs to come from the state or through the state — and certainly the money — but ultimately the more the local communities are in control of their destiny, they will do a better job."*

*"A home run would be level 5 levees, and wetlands are IT. Otherwise, insurance will kill us. If we don't solve that FAST - everything else is in jeopardy."*

*"I don't have a tremendous amount of respect for our representatives. We have a rich culture of politics - sadly. Our legislatures don't look long term enough. There is too much patronage. We have the second largest per capita in nursing homes - other states have moved away from that. We have the first or second rate of prisons. This is all patronage. We do not have leaders who are looking at the long term good of our citizens. With the right leadership you can fix the economy, the education system."*

*"As Americans, we can take off and run if you give us a little bit. If the Feds can certify that we will be safe, then capitalism will run its course. The opportunity will be incredible. But they have to have a plan for the levees - set dates and say how."*

*"I may be an optimistic and an incrementalist - I like achievable chunks. What's the measure of success? We need to execute this owner-occupied plan. It's a plan, not a grand scheme."*

*"We have to have some short term wins and incrementally take small steps leading up to longer term wins. You have to have buy-in. It's got to withstand multiple election cycles. It needs to be a flexible plan but not in a position to be tinkered with."*

*"One of my strong, strong convictions is that we need a healthy non profit sector in order to maintain a quality of life. And that entails everything from a rich arts and cultural sector to Alzheimer's day care for the elderly. As much as things can be neighborhood based so people can feel they belong. We need to incorporate the leaders of the non profit sector in the plan. The very small grassroots and faith based need to be involved in the plan, not just the big guys. The feet on the ground and the helping arms."*

*Comments on Economic Recovery:*

*"From an economic development standpoint, we have to figure out how to get the tourism industry to thrive. But we need higher paying jobs that require more training and education."*

*"What are they going to do about the 'Bright Flight,' young professionals leaving the city that have the opportunity to move somewhere else? What is this planning*

*process going to do to encourage them to stay home and a new, young group to come here?"*

*"I don't think it's a business segment, it's our people. People want to stay here. We need to get behind the entrepreneurs. Present to the entrepreneurs short- and long-term opportunities. Take our talent and come to them with opportunities and let them go for it. Let them chase the opportunities, and mandate that locals are involved in the growth. We can recruit but that doesn't necessarily transition to local dollars. Entrepreneurs are ready to step up."*

*"Business is paying too much in taxes. It's time to change the culture, that way of thinking. That will be difficult but it needs to happen. The world changed on Aug 29, 2005 - who in their right mind is willing to wait for the state to make it happen?"*

*"I am convinced personally that the future of New Orleans is related to Baton Rouge. The competition between the two cities needs to diminish (and then) we'll see an explosion of growth between the two cities. A number of businesses that had their main headquarters in New Orleans and a smaller office in Baton Rouge have reversed that post Katrina. We have to be realistic about the future economic development of New Orleans if we are going to move beyond just tourism. There is a potential for a development of a commercial stretch between the two cities that could be very significant."*

*"One thing has already happened to the people in both cities - what the Baton Rouge community did for evacuees from New Orleans was EXTRAORDINARY. I think there is a deep appreciation and a human rapport that has developed with the rank and file that can and should be built on. I'm not sure the leaders are there yet. The human relationships in the post Katrina time, however difficult, can be built on. It is unacceptable now for our legislators and our mayors to maintain the competitive stances of the past. We need to see ourselves in a new situation of seeing the common good. And seeing ourselves regionally."*

*"An example of what I think is extraordinary is a group of people in New Orleans East. It had been largely wetland, it was developed largely by middle class African Americans and Vietnamese. We have about 20,000 Vietnamese. The Vietnamese community formed teams that went house to house, to clean them and rip out the dry wall and to bring together with their own expertise. They have developed a neighborhood plan for rebuilding, a commercial district plan that brings together their businesses and culture, they have included housing for the elderly. All the FEMA trailers were set up on the property of the Vietnamese church. This is an example of self determination. They are committed to making sacrifices. We had floods in Vietnam. We came here and had nothing. We are going to work together. That kind of story should manifest the vision that we have the motivation and the commitment of the local citizens."*

*"The biggest growth will be in small companies. We should grow our own and not just raid companies from another neighboring state so that someone else loses their job. Its all about entrepreneurship and job creating."*

*"Until we get better parity, the whole community will not grow. President Bush even said we should focus attention on African American independent businesses. We've got to make a conscious decision to bring minority businesses back in addition to other kinds of businesses."*

*Comments on Education:*

*"We need to make a commitment to fixing the drop out rate. Not all kids want to go to a 4 year college. Construction is going to be KEY over the next 25 years. Get them in plumbing, electrical training."*

*"Having a properly educated workforce - there are a lot of jobs available that people are not trained for, not specifically skilled for. In an ideal world, we have to get this right - we have trade schools and vocational schools but they are not matched with the specific skills. There is a disconnect there. We need job-ready technical training."*

*"Long term also needs to include work force development. Generally people forget that there needs to be major training - a strategic and comprehensive plan for training. To assess what is the capacity now and what do we need to build to and how is monitoring that. The community colleges and technical schools and universities can be sources of excellence for this training."*

*"Educate. Educate. Educate. Educate. There is no question. Is it financial? Not always. We do need money but we really need to revisit what we do and how we do it. We need to start immediately and that all of our citizenry have skills and can be productive for building and maintaining quality communities."*

## Appendix 2: Civic Leader Research Participants

- Al Prebula, Oil and Gas/Petrochemical
- Alden McDonald, Liberty Bank, BNOB Board Member
- Anthony Patton, Ebonetworks, BNOB Board Member
- Archbishop Hughes, Archdiocese of New Orleans, BNOB Board Member
- Archie Manning
- Ben Johnson, Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Bill Fontenot - Acadiana Park Nature Station
- Bill Oliver, BellSouth Communications
- Bill Rau, Rau Antiques
- Boysie Bollinger Chairman, CEO of Bollinger Shipyards, BNOB and LRA Board Member
- Brenda Birkett, McNeese State University
- Brent McCoy, Lamar Advertising, and board member of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of L.A.
- Calvin Mackie, PhD, LRA Board Member
- Camm Morton, Commercial Properties Development Corp.
- Carlton Dufrechou, Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation
- Carol A. Carter, Assistant Director, Entrepreneurship Institute Louisiana State University
- Carol Asher, Exec. Director at Tipitina Foundation
- Cesar Burgos, Burgos and Evans, L.L.C. , BNOB Board Member
- Charles Castille, Undersecretary, Management and Finance Office, Health and Hospitals Department, Louisiana
- Charles Landry, Jones Walker
- Christel Slaughter, Partner SSA Consultants
- Christophor Faust, NOLA Rising Construction Services, LLC
- Cordell Haymon, Chair of the Board of the Center for Planning Excellence/Petroleum Services Corp.
- Craig Colten, LSU Department of Geology and Anthropology/Transforming New Orleans and Its Environs
- Dan Borne, Louisiana Chemical Association
- David Voelker, Frantzen Voelker Investments, LRA Board Member
- Davis Rhorer, Director of the Baton Rouge Downtown Development District
- Dennis Stine, Stine Lumber
- Diana Lewis, The New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative
- Dick Kennison, Kennison Forest Products
- Donald Smithburg, CEO LSU Healthcare Services
- Donna Fraiche, Chair of the LRA Long-Term Community Planning Task Force and Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz
- Dr. Claude Bouchard, Pennington Biomedical Research Center
- Dr. Larry Hollier, Chancellor of LSUHSC
- Dr. William Jenkins, President of LSU System
- Errol George - Neighborhood Association for Lake Bullard (I.Q. person)
- Father Vien, Mary Queen of Viet Nam Church in New Orleans
- Francis Deblanc – President of the Lake Marina Towers & a part of Pathfinder Energy Services



- Gary Solomon, Crescent Bank and Trust, BNOB Board Member
- George Nelson, Louisiana Companies
- Gordon Cagnolatti – President of Carrollton Riverbend RA
- Greg Godfrey, Louisiana Pigment Company
- Hon. Aaron Broussard, President of Jefferson Parish
- Hon. Joey Durel, Parish President Lafayette
- Jackie Jones, Jeremiah Group
- James Kelly, CEO Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans
- James Perry, Executive Director of Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
- Janice Pellar - Pres. EMCO Technologies
- Jay Campbell, Associated Grocers
- Jim Richardson, LSU Public Admin. School of Business
- Jimmy Maurin, Stirling Properties
- John LaBorde, Tidewater, Inc.
- John T. Landry, Director of Development for the University of Louisiana Lafayette, LRA Board Member
- Kathy Laborde, President Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, BNOB Board Member
- Keith Villere, Former Mayor and owner of Villere Town Planning Associates
- Kim M. Boyle, Phelps Dunbar L.L.P. , BNOB Board Member
- Lauren Anderson, Neighborhood Housing Services
- Lee Griffin, Chairman and CEO of Louisiana Bank One
- Lisa Kaichen, Unified Non profits of Greater New Orleans
- Loren Scott, Louisiana State University
- Lorna Bourg, Southern Mutual Help Association
- Lucien Gunter, Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO)
- Lucinda Flowers, New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative
- Mark Drennen, Greater New Orleans, Inc.
- Mary A. Sternberg - Internship Coordinator at LSU Manship School of Mass Communication
- Matt Stuller, Stuller, Inc. , LRA Board Member
- Max Hoyt, Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor Candace Watkins, Covington
- Mayor Charles Caillouet, City of Thibodaux
- Mayor Harold Rideau, City of Baker
- Mayor Jimmy Durbin, City of Denham Springs
- Mayor Mark Gulotta, Plaquemine
- Mayor Mayson Foster, Hammond
- Mayor Peter L. Gitz, Madisonville
- Mayor Randy Roach, Lake Charles
- Mayor Ronnie Harris, City of Gretna
- Mayor Timothy I. Matte, Morgan City
- Mayor William D'Aquila, St. Francisville
- Mel LaGarde III., CEO of HCA Healthcare, BNOB Board Member
- Michael Sartisky, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities
- Mike Woods, Woods Operating Inc., LRA Board Member
- Mtumishi St. Julien, New Orleans Finance Authority
- Myrtle Dorsey, Chancellor, Baton Rouge Community College

- Norman Saurage, CEO Community Coffee
- Pam Breaux, State of Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
- Phyllis Mouton, Vice Chancellor, Baton Rouge Community College
- Renae Conley, Pres/CEO, Entergy
- Rene Cross, President of Cross Construction, LRA Board Member
- Representative William Daniel, District 68
- Rev. Jennifer Jones-Bridgett, Working Interfaith Network
- Rev. Raymond Jetson, Pastor, Star Hill Baptist Church and Former State Representative
- Rod West, Entergy, BNOB and LRA Board Member
- Roy Docca, LSU University Prof. of Engineering and a Geologist
- Rusty Cloutier, MidSouth Bank
- Ruthie Frierson - Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans
- Sally Clausen, President of University of Louisiana System
- Scott Cowen, President of Tulane University, BNOB Board Member
- Scott Hutcheson, Arts Council of New Orleans
- Sean Reilly, Lamar Advertising, LRA Board Member
- Senator Robert Adley, Represent Parishes in North LA near Arkansas, Texas lines
- Stephen Moret, Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce
- Stuart Smolkin - President Lakewood Property Owners Association
- Suzanne Turner, Former LSU professor and Neighborhood Association leader
- Tim P. Coulon, LRA Board Member
- Tim Ryan, University of New Orleans Chancellor
- Tom Henning, LRA Board Member
- Vincent Sylvain, President Sylvain Solutions
- Virgil Robinson, Dryades Savings Bank, LRA Board Member
- Wilma Subra, Subra, Inc.
- Wilmer Frietag – Neighborhood Association

### Appendix 3: Questions for In-depth Interviews with Stakeholders

#### **Introduction:**

As you may know, the Louisiana Recovery Authority has initiated a long term 25 year plan that is called "Louisiana Speaks." This plan covers the entire South Louisiana region and is being created with the help of national planning experts like Andres Duany, Peter Calthorpe, The Brookings Institution and others. The regional planning process is in the initial phase, and the purpose of this interview is to get your input so that the planning team can start building in your ideas and perceptions right away. As you may know, this interview is confidential - we will put your name on the list of those interviewed, but we will detach your answers and they will only be shown in summary form. This interview will probably take about 20 minutes. Are you ready to start?

#### **Questions:**

- 1) Are you on the LRA Board?
- 2) Are you on the Bring New Orleans Back Board?
- 3) What city do you live in?
- 4) How much do you already know about the long range planning process? Are you optimistic, pessimistic or some of each about this plan so far?
- 5) What are your biggest hopes for the long range planning process?
- 6) What are the three factors that will make the plan most successful?
- 7) What do you think the three biggest obstacles are for the plan to be successful?
- 8) What do you feel is the best economic asset to build on for the future?
- 9) What are your thoughts on an effective economic development strategy for the plan?
- 10) If you had the power to accomplish it, what one thing would you do for the best economic development return in your region?
- 11) If you had the power to change it, what one economic development effort in your region would you change or terminate? How would you change it?
- 11b) Are you familiar w/ the Gulf Opportunity Zone incentives?

- 12) What systemic changes need to be made for Southern Louisiana to truly thrive and prosper?
- 13) Do you feel that the political courage exists to make those changes happen? Why or why not?
- 14) Do you think that wetlands restoration should be a big priority or not?  
Do you support spending as much as \$16 Billion on protecting them?
- 15) What thoughts do you have on the eventual implementation of the long range plan?
- 16) What else do you want the planning team to know?
- 17) What is the best way to communicate about the plan in your community?
- 18) Do you have any questions that you want the planning team to answer for you - we are making a list and would be happy to include any that you may have or that you think opinion leaders in your community might have?

Thanks so much for your time. We will send you a copy of our report in about six weeks.